DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 656 CE 043 031

AUTHOR Overbeck, Carla
TITLE A Survival Kit for Teaching English to Refugees. TECHNIQUES.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 3p.; Edited from the Virginia ABE Newsletter.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Lifelong Learning; v8 n2 p29-30 Oct 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Conversational Language Courses; *Daily Living Skills; *English (Second Language); *Functional Literacy; Instructional Materials; *Refugees; *Teacher Developed Materials; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Adult basic education and English as a second language teachers, as well as volunteer tutors, can help new refugees acquire functional English through the use of a survival kit. The Literacy Volunteers of America's guide to teaching conversational English recommends these items for a survival kit: a written copy of student's name, address, and telephone number, which is helpful in dealing with persons who may not understand his/her English; alphabet and number cards for teaching their names; price tags, sales slips, and newspaper ads to teach numbers and the use of money; coins and "play" bills to teach the value of coins and currency; a neighborhood or city map to help the student navigate; a list of clothing sizes of the student and his/her family; a cardboard or paper plate clock for teaching time; a calendar to learn days of week and months; a menu and bus schedule to help students learn to order food and use a metropolitan bus system; and pieces of colored construction paper to teach colors. Elaborations could include poker chips to learn the number system and a picture file to teach vocabulary. While survival kits initially require close supervision by an instructor, they can help new refugees learn the English they need every day, without a textbook and with inexpensive materials. (YLB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED272656

*Edited from the Virginia ABE Newsletter*

# A Survival Kit for Teaching English to Refugees

*by Carla Overbeck*
*Ms. Overbeck is an aide in the Lexington ABE program.*

Refugees who have recently arrived in the United States have many pressing needs. One of these needs is the acquisition of survival English. ABE and ESL teachers, as well as volunteer tutors, can help new refugees acquire functional English through the use of a survival kit.

*I Speak English*, Literacy Volunteers of America's guide to teaching conversational English, recommends the following items for a survival kit: 1) student's name, address, and phone number written on a sheet of paper; 2) alphabet cards; 3) number cards; 4) price tags; 5) coins and "play" bills; 6) a neighborhood or city map; 7) clothing sizes of the student and of his or her family; 8) a cardboard clock or one made from a paper plate; 9) a calendar; 10) a menu; 11) colored papers; 12) a bus schedule.

As a former coordinator of tutors for a refugee family, I would like to elaborate on this list and to add a few items. Obviously, adult immigrants need to be able to recite their names, addresses, and telephone numbers when asked. However, a written copy of this information is helpful in dealing with agency personnel and store clerks to provide correct information when the students' English is difficult to understand. Students who obtain Social Security numbers should learn these numbers also.

Alphabet and number cards are useful in teaching the names of letters and numbers. Number cards 1 through 35 in the Level 1 Peabody Language Development Kit (American Guidance Service, 1965) are excellent for this purpose, or numbers can be printed on individual index cards. A sheet of paper containing all the capital and small letters of the alphabet is useful in teaching the names of letters, as are letters printed on individual index cards. A box or large envelope containing poker chips can also be useful in teaching the number system. Students can be asked to count the number of poker chips in a pile or to place a particular number of poker chips in a pile.

Price tags, sales slips, and newspaper ads are useful in teaching numbers and the use of money. Price tags are often difficult to read, and students can be taught which number on a price tag is the price, which number is the size of clothing, and which numbers are irrelevant to the consumer. Price tags showing net weight and price per pound as well as total price are especially useful, as are sale tags with marked-down prices. Sales slips and newspaper ads are useful in teaching combinations of dollars and cents.

A variety of coins and either "play" bills or real currency can be used to teach the value of coins and currency and the interrelationships among coins and between coins and currency. Students can be asked to place given amounts of money on a desk or table, and the instructor and student can role play exchanges between a store clerk and consumer, exchanging roles to give the student the opportunity to make change.

CE 043031

## HOW TO USE TECHNIQUES

*Techniques can be reproduced without permission for use in workshops or general dissemination to staff. If you have an idea for Techniques, write for guidelines.*



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
American Assn for Adult & Continuing Education
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A neighborhood or city map can be useful in helping students navigate on their own. Important places can be circled on the map—libraries, schools, and so forth—and students can be taught the names of these landmarks, as well as street names. Ideally, names of landmarks and street names should be taught while the instructor and student walk to each of the places shown on the map.

A list of clothing sizes of the student and of his or her family can be invaluable when the family purchases new clothing. The list may need to be prepared with the help of an interpreter, a friend of the family, or the family's sponsoring organization. If clothing sizes in the student's native country are uniform, the corresponding "American" sizes can be written next to the student's former size designations. Students should understand the American number system before receiving this list, however.

A cardboard clock or one made from a paper plate is useful in teaching time after the student knows the American number system. The hands can be set and the student asked what time it is, or the student can be asked to set the clock to a certain time. In general, according to *I Speak English*, hours should be taught first, then half hours, then quarter hours and smaller units of time.

A calendar is also a useful tool after the student understands the American number system. Days of the week are taught first, then months, and finally individual dates on the calendar according to *I Speak English*. The student should learn to point to a particular day of the week or month or to a correct date when it is stated and to verbalize a particular day of the week or month or the correct date when it is indicated on the calendar by the tutor.

A menu from a local restaurant and a bus schedule for students in large cities can be used with more advanced students to help them order food and use a metropolitan bus system. The names of colors can be taught through the use of 1" × 6", 1" × 5", 1" × 3" pieces of colored construction paper. These pieces of paper can also be used in oral drills, as can most of the other items in the survival kit. (See chapter 7 of *I Speak English* for examples of oral drills.) In addition, the names of colors can be taught using the color cards in the Level 1 Peabody Language Development Kit (American Guidance Service, 1965).

Finally, vocabulary can be taught through the use of a picture file consisting of pictures of objects in a category glued to sheets of colored construction paper or selected cards in the Level 1 Peabody Language Development Kit. The Level 1 Peabody Kit contains 12 categories of pictures with one picture per card. The *Oxford Picture Dictionary of American English* (Oxford University Press, 1978) can also be used, but its many detailed pictures on each page may be confusing to some new students.

How can the survival kit be used in an ABE or ESL classroom or by volunteer tutors? At least initially, an instructor needs to work closely with a student who is using the survival kit to learn English. In the case of an ABE classroom with only one or two ESL students, perhaps an aide or a trained volunteer could work with the ESL students in using the survival kit while the instructor works with the other students. The great advantage in having a survival kit on hand for ABE instructors is that the instructor need not panic if an ESL student unexpectedly turns up and no ESL text is available: the materials in the survival kit can take a student through many English lessons.

An ESL instructor with different levels of students can work closely with a group of new immigrants using the survival kit, while more advanced students work on their own in textbooks or in a group with an aide. Volunteers who tutor in students' homes can leave survival kits with their students so the students can work with these materials at their leisure.

Thus while survival kits initially require close supervision by an instructor they can help new refugees learn the English they need every day without a textbook and with inexpensive materials.